4: Joseph et al D,E-5 (1942-1943) 1949
NU28 Papago NU28

PEOPLE ON THE DESERT

The two largest Indian villages are in the central and southeastern sections of the Reservation—Topawa in Baboquivari and Gu Achi (Santa Rosa) in the Gu Achi District.

Unlike most Indian tribes in the United States, the Papago have rather recently come under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, United States Department of the Interior; the main reservation (the last large one established) dates only from 1917. The local government agency at Sells on the Papago Reservation is also responsible for the San Xavier and Gila Bend reservations.

The Reservation population includes about fifty white government employees and their families, chiefly concentrated at Sells. Scattered over the Reservation are other white people—teachers in the schools under government or religious auspices, other members of the government and mission staffs, traders, and a few miners.

The Papago live on the land, as they have for centuries, by farming small fields and raising livestock, but in recent years they have depended increasingly on wage work on near-by ranches and farms and in mines as well as on employment by the government. Thus an alien culture is entering into their way of life—a culture that has already made a deep impression on the Desert People.

As a group the Papago do not much resemble the stereotype which the word "Indian" brings to the minds of most white people: tall gaunt men in eagle-feather headdresses and blanketed women carrying babies on their backs. Though most Papago are rather tall, have large shoulders and chests, and are inclined toward obesity,[2] some are small and slender, and others are of medium build. In all there is a delicacy of feet and hands which suggests small bones. Typical Papago have wide faces with rather heavy features; slanted eyes and long-lobed ears are common. They have dark-brown eyes and straight black hair. Many are dark-skinned, but much of this coloring is due to life in the sun; when a man rolls up his sleeves, one usually sees arms that are a soft yellowish brown.

Among the Desert People there are few extreme variations of physical type such as may be observed on reservations like the Sioux, where an Indian may have flaxen hair and blue eyes. Less than one-tenth of 1 per cent of those on the tribal roll are "Papago-American," i.e., have white blood. But there is some Yaqui and other Indian blood among the Papago, and in recent years a few young Papago have married members of other Indian tribes they met at off-Reservation boarding schools.

2. See Norman Gabel, "A Comparative Racial Study of the Papago" (MS).

162 Age Distribution. The median age of a person of Papago descent is between 19 and 20 years. The median age of the rural population of the United States is 27.8. There is no doubt that this is a young population and that the age distribution is comparable to populations where living conditions are difficult, where modern sanitation practices are not adhered to, and where the application of modern medicine is not yet reflected in population figures.

162 191 A comparison of age groups with the United States rural population in 1956 is given below.

Table 6. Total Papago Population by Age Groups Compared with Rural America

Age Group	Papago Number	Papago Percent	Rural America Percent
Under 5 years	1671	14.65	12.39
5 to 9 years	1598	14.01	11.98
10 to 14 years	1335	11.70	9.57
15 to 19 years	1158	10.15	7.32
20 to 24 years	993	8.70	5.10
25 to 34 years	1624	14.24	13.26
35 to 44 years	1156	10.13	13.22
45 to 54 years	891	7.81	10.59
55 to 64 years	512	4.48	7.97
65 and over	466	4.08	8.56
Total	11,404		
Age not known	371		

144 162 Race Composition. An examination of our statistics on the age and residence of Papagos of mixed ancestry (whether the mixture is with non-Indians or with members of other Indian tribes) reveals that mixed-blood Papagos and marriages of Papagos with non-Papagos have been increasing in frequency and that, as would be expected, mixed marriages are most common among Papagos living off the reservation. (Table 7)

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Table 7. Racial Composition of the Total Papago Population by Age and Residence

	ON RESERVATION					OFF RESERVATION				
		Full Blood		Mixed Blood			Full Blood		Mixed Blood	
Age Group	Total	Number	%	Number	%	Total	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5	569	479	84	90	16	1004	518	52	486	48
5 to 9	631	534	85	97	15	916	493	54	423	46
10 to 14	578	517	89	61	11	737	410	56	327	44
15 to 19	437	399	91	38	9	691	396	57	295	43
20 to 24	348	329	95	19	5	613	410	67	203	33
25 to 34	585	555	95	30	5	989	733	74	256	26
35 to 44	493	471	96	22	4	642	529	82	113	18
45 to 54	445	429	96	16	4	427	334	78	93	22
55 to 64	302	295	98	7	2	190	166	87	24	13
65 & over	343	340	99	3	1	106	98	92	8	8
Total	4794	4408	92	386	8	6453	4171	65	2282	35
Age not Known	63	60		3		138	84		54	

Residence. As was noted above, 54% of all Papagos 162 [131] of known residence usually make their home on the three Papago reservations or on other Arizona reservations. The [128] count, however, must be taken with some caution since our informants could not be expected to give uniform answers to the question respecting "usual present residence". The [67] majority of reservation residents move off the reservation

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Table 10. Age Proportions
of "Primitive" and "Civilized" Groups

Age Group	Navajo	1959 Papago	Sweden
0- 4	17.1%	14.65%	9.1%
5-14	28.9	25.71	13.9
15-24	20.0	18.86	12.9
25-34	11.3	14.24	15.6
35-44	8.2	10.13	15.5
45-54	5.9	7.81	13.0
55-64	3.6	4.48	10.0
65+	4.2	4.08	10.1

The columns show the differing proportions of "primitive" and "civilized" populations which appear in the various age classes. The basic variable is life expectancy.
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In populations such as the Navajo, with short life-span, there is a tendency for a large proportion of the total group to be concentrated in the lower age ranges. In Western European civilization, where nations have the world's longest life expectancies, the population when grouped by age, tends to distribute equally across all categories.

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The transitional nature of the Papago population is illustrated by comparison of proportions of all three populations under 25 years of age. The Navajo proportion is 66%, the Papago is 59%, and the Swedish, 36%. The table above shows the Papago proportion in each age class to fall between the extremes represented by Sweden and Navajo.

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Race Composition. The trend in favor of greater racial mixture at the younger age levels has already been noted. One out of every three Papago children born today has at least

one parent who is not a Papago fullblood. Thirty years ago the proportion was one out of thirty or less. 144 162

Mixture at the present time is by no means sufficient to imply that biological assimilation of the Papagos is taking place, or is likely to occur. Papago outgroup marriages has become a significant factor in the 35-55 year age group, however. This inference is warranted by the proportion of mixedblood children appearing in the birth through 25 year age classes. The visible effect of this mixture will be lessened by the preference pattern of Papagos for other Indians rather than non-Indians. Still, the accelerating rate of out-group marriage indicates the probability of profound behavioral changes within the next several generations of Papago family life. 144 162 582

Origin Composition. The first substantial proportion of the Papago population to originate off the reservation (25%) appears in the 15-19 year age class. This proportion increases to 44% in the 0-4 class. These figures indicate that the majority of the Papago births are still occurring within reservation families, but the balance is shifting toward off-reservation origin. Projection of the present trend indicates a majority of Papagos will originate outside Papago reservation areas within the next twenty-five years. This projection is based on the observation that there has been an average 5% increase in the proportion of each successive age group born off the reservation in the past 25 years. 162 161 178